

The Secret Steps

Step Six

The Big Book only takes a paragraph on doing Step Six:

"Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand? If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all, everyone? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

"When ready, we say something like this:

"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen."

"We have then completed Step Seven.

"Now we need more action, without which we find that 'Faith without works is dead.'"

Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine."

We are often unwilling to give up our defects because we get benefits. We manipulate other people to get what we want or we get to avoid what we don't like. We get to be irresponsible and we get to continue our historical indulgence of "me, Me ME!"

What would life be like without these old, comfortable, and familiar defects? Would we be willing to live the life our Higher Power guides us to live?

Would we be willing to live without our indulgence and control that has marked our previous life? And if we are not willing, are we willing to become willing?

- Are you now ready to let God remove from you all the things which you have admitted are objectionable in Steps 4 & 5?
- Can He (God) now take them all — every one of them?
- If we are not entirely ready, we pray for the willingness?

Step Seven

When you are honestly able to answer those questions "yes," you are ready to move forward to Step Seven and that Step has even fewer words in the Big Book than Step Six.

If we are ready, we pray the “7th Step Prayer” (page 76):

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”

Remember, the prayers given for Steps Three and Seven say they are only suggestions. You may choose your own words so long as they express the idea behind these two prayers and that those words come from your heart.

Remember “Faith without Works is dead,” but so is “Works without Faith.” Your willingness to give up your old ways, your old desires, and your old defects must be as sincere as you can make it, even if that willingness is not perfect.

In AA, you will see others come in, learn how to quote the Big Book, to parrot back the sayings they hear in meetings, but know that they really only seek the approval of others in their meetings without needing to make a real change.

See also - “The Full Prayer”